

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system, device, and method for managing alternate site switching in an optical communication system recovers from failures/degradations that are uncorrected by the core optical communication network. When an uncorrected failure/degradation is detected, communications for a protected end-system are switched from a primary end-system to a backup end-system. The backup end-system may be selected *a priori*, for example, during connection establishment, in order to reduce switching time once a decision has been made to switch communications from the primary end-system to the backup end-system. Provisions are made for completing the alternate site switching within a specified amount of time. Load balancing may be used to further reduce switching time from the primary end-system to the backup end-system. This alternate site switching augments the various protection mechanisms provided by the core optical communication network in order to provide end-to-end protection for the optical communication path.